



News from the Cultural Resources Management,
Tribal Liaison Office, & Environmental Programs of the
Department of Military & Veterans Affairs,
Alaska Army National Guard

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2nd Quarter 2012, June

Greetings,

The DMVA is happy to announce some very important news regarding a new program that is now in effect to help Alaska veterans that live in villages around the state. The success of this program was bolstered by a visit of Senator Begich, National Guard General Katkus, and U.S. Secretary of Veterans Administration General (retired) Shinseki last year to Kwigillingok. Please make sure spread the news to your friends and family.

Important Announcement about Increased Access to Health Care for Veterans

A sharing and reimbursement agreement has been finalized to facilitate Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) reimbursement to Alaska Tribal Health Programs (ATHP) for direct care services provided to eligible veterans. The signed agreement will strengthen both VA and ATHP, help increase access to care all over Alaska and enhance continuity of treatment for Native and eligible non-Native veterans, particularly those in remote and rural areas. ATHPs have special expertise in providing a full range of culturally competent health services to Alaska Natives.

The 13th National VA/IHS/Tribal Alaska Workgroup was established following Secretary Shinseki's visit to Alaska on Memorial Day 2011 (see our newsletter from September, 2011 for details of that visit). Chaired by Susan Yeager, the VA's Rural Liaison, all ATHP's are represented on this board as well as the State of Alaska through the Office of Veterans Affairs. An ad hoc group was developed in October 2011 to work all sharing agreements between the VA and ATHP's. The group's primary leadership came from Myra Munson an attorney for Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Miller & Munson. Without her dedication, this agreement could not have occurred.

The following items are direct positive outcomes for Alaska veterans:

- The first State/Native Health Program to reach such an agreement.
- Will infuse funds into the Alaska Tribal Health Programs.
- The VA Recognizes Native Health Aides as medical personnel who can provide healthcare to veterans.
- All direct services provided by an Alaska Native Health Program to an eligible Alaska Native veteran/non-veteran for which that veteran is eligible will be reimbursed by VA.
- In remote locations, expedited annual preauthorization for services to non-Alaska Native veterans has been agreed upon as follows: twelve month period with 6 primary care visits and 4 behavioral health visits. If additional visits are needed, a care plan will be requested by VA and approval based on the veterans' needs.

- VA will reimburse for the services of all classes of certified community health aides (community health aides I, I, III, IV and community health practitioners; all levels of behavioral health aides; and all classes of dental health aides, including dental health aide therapists) at the Medicaid encounter rate. If the only provider is a community health aide the reimbursement will be 85% of the Medicaid encounter rate.
- Inpatient hospital care will be reimbursed the full Medicaid inpatient encounter rate.
- Outpatient hospital and clinic services will be reimbursed on the Medicaid outpatient encounter rate.
- VA will be the payer of first resort for veterans who are treated in the Alaska Native Health Program.
- VA will reimburse pharmaceuticals for Native veterans with no co-payment. Non-Native veterans will be assisted in using VA Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) per their eligibility in the program.
- Agreement is for 5 years and can be modified or cancelled.
- Travel benefits are based on the veterans eligibility. Those veterans who are established by the VA as 30% or greater are offered travel. Veterans who are provided Compensation and Pension physicals also travel at VA expense.
- Veteran must be eligible and service must be in their VA benefits package.
- There will be a 60 day implementation period after signing before billing begins.

It is difficult to quantify the impact this agreement will have to the State of Alaska and our veterans who live here. This is the first time in the nation that this type of coverage has been provided to our Native and non-Native. This plan was presented to Secretary Shinseki during his 2011 Memorial Day visit and today it is a reality. **Our Alaska veterans can now receive healthcare where they live.**

Prior to this agreement, we were unable to sign Native veterans up for VA Healthcare due to their fear of being required to pay co-payments. Now that this requirement is no longer in existence, we will be able reach more eligible veterans and ensure the lost funds no longer impact the local communities.

The State of Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs will leverage these agreements with ATHP's to encourage all eligible veterans to sign up for VA medical coverage. Our first step in this process will be to have our VSO's enroll all veterans' filing disability and compensations claims file for VA medical benefits simultaneously. Next, we will add this process to the Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) procedures. TVR's are sometimes the first point of access to the VA from the villages. Finally, we will utilize the new travel funds provided for outreach to send VSO's and TVR's to as many communities as the funds allow. This will help us educate the veterans on the importance of registering with the VA.



For more information,
please contact the

Alaska VA Healthcare
System at:

1201 N. Muldoon Rd
Anchorage, AK
99504
907-257-4700 or
1-888-353-7574

Military Funeral Honors Program Pays Tribute to Alaskan Veterans, by Staff Sgt. Karima Turner

The Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program is paying tribute to veterans all across Alaska in record numbers, honoring more than 400 veterans last year alone. During fiscal year 2011, the Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program provided an honor guard detail for 444 military funerals throughout Alaska. According to Charles Einarson, Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program state coordinator, each year that number continues to grow.

“Last year, in fiscal year 2011 we had a 230 percent increase over fiscal year 2010,” Einarson said. “So far this year, we’ve already conducted half the number of services that we conducted in 2011.”

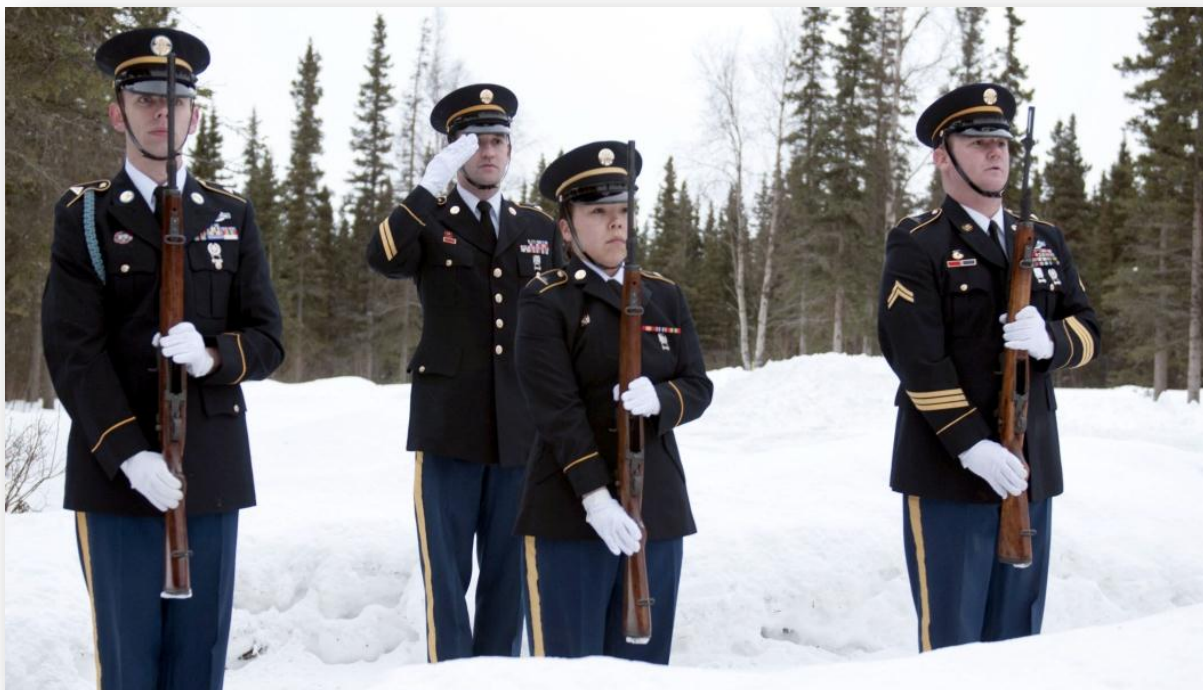
Part of that growth stems from an increased awareness about the program. There is also a push to spread the word as to who is eligible for funeral honors.

“Previously, nobody knew about the Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program, and they didn’t think that the active duty military funeral honors programs would handle a Guardsman’s funeral, so many veterans passed away and didn’t receive honors,” Einarson said. “Now that we are becoming more well-known, we are being utilized like we should. People also like it when we perform the funeral honors because we are from their towns; we are Alaskans too.”

Eight Soldiers from the Alaska Army National Guard, five of whom have attended the Military Funeral Honors course in Arlington, Va., comprise the full-time team and are authorized to wear the honor guard tab on their uniforms. Twenty Soldiers augment the Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program part-time and assist on an on- call basis throughout the state.

“Whenever a service member passes away in the state, whether he or she is a one-year veteran or a 20-year retiree, we travel to the site and provide final honors for the family – flag fold, firing party – whatever we can based on what is authorized for that service member,” Einarson said.

He added that often times he will get a phone call from one of his part-time honor guard members or from a church in one of the remote villages requesting support.



“Having traditional Guardsmen as part-time honor guards located around the state is beneficial because when we get requests from some of the villages, instead of flying several honor guard members out there, we can send maybe one or two to join the Soldier already in the village and perform military funeral honors,” Einarson said.

He said the honor guard’s role is important during such a delicate time for families. Honor guard members perform their job with pride and go to great lengths to adhere to military customs so that their tribute captures the essence of a person’s military service. In Alaska, the honor guard covers a large geographical area, and Einarson hopes he can grow the team.

“We have traveled across the state to render these last honors for Soldiers,” Einarson said. “I would like to create two complete honor guard teams, one in Anchorage and one in Fairbanks, and I want them to be able to rival Arlington – that’s the kind of program I came from and that’s the kind I’d like to develop here.” That commitment to creating and maintaining a top notch funeral honors team encourages members to put forward their best every day. “Being a full-time honor guard member is competitive,” Einarson explained. “Every 90 days, Soldiers have to prove they are meeting the standards of the team. Whether it’s physical fitness, performance or attitude, there’s a whole list of criteria to remain on this team.”

Einarson said because of current funding, the Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program isn’t adding any additional full-time slots right now, but the program is constantly looking for new members who want to help. “This is a great opportunity for Soldiers looking to volunteer,” he said. “We have 20 part-time honor guard members throughout the state, but we are always looking for more volunteers, especially in western Alaska because the Alaska Army National Guard unit based out of Bethel is currently deployed.”

With Alaska home to 77,000 veterans, the Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program plays a pivotal role in paying tribute to those who have served the country. Each team member feels honored to be a part of this process. “This is the most rewarding job I’ve ever had, and it’s important that we can provide this service,” Einarson said. “It’s the last benefit the Soldier will receive and our country’s way of saying thank you and giving that final farewell. It’s closure.”

You can contact the Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program at 428-6252.

YouTube link to “Alaska Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors”:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEfoQ6nhENI&list=UU-mL7o0dsBJj_jHI-vrDm3Q&index=2&feature=plcp

Armory Spotlight: Sitka

The Sitka Armory building is located on the coastal side of Sawmill Creek Road a short distance past the Sitka National Historical Park. The armory is a slab-on-grade, steel frame, two-story building built in 1970, with grey and blue walls and a metal roof. The building was originally constructed for use as a boat repair and



sales facility and has been acquired and adapted for use by the National Guard. The distinguishing feature of the building is a bank of large windows in the upper half of the front and side walls, positioned to illuminate the building’s large storage bay. The main 100 by 75 foot building contains offices,

supply rooms, bathrooms, and drill hall. In addition to the main building, there are three smaller shop buildings on the property, each occupying roughly 1,000 square feet. These include: a vehicle maintenance shop, a weapons storage building, and former fiberglass shop.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Employee: Jeffrey Herrick

The Alaska Army National Guard's Installation Status Report (ISR) manager is Jeff Herrick, of Eagle River. Jeff has been travelling the State for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) since April, 2010, inspecting armories, airfields, hangars and other infrastructure. Originally from Pittsburgh, Jeff came to Alaska in 1994 and spent three tours in the 49th State before retiring after 26 years of service. As a Civil Engineer Technician, he inspected construction and Air Force facilities statewide, to include the Long Range Radar sites on the old DEW Line, and the forward Air Stations at Galena, King Salmon and Shemya. Jeff currently works closely with their Environmental section and the staff at HQ. He enjoys hunting, hiking, skiing and snow machining in the Alaskan wilderness with his two sons, and says his travels throughout Alaska's small towns and villages have given him a renewed understanding and a deep appreciation for our diverse cultures and Arctic ways of life.



The Alaska Territorial Guard -ATG- Project Continues

The State Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Office of Veterans Affairs is continuing its efforts in collecting discharge applications for those that served in the Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG). The ATG was organized across Alaska in 1942 and was disbanded 31 March 1947.

Currently, over 6,400 names are on the roster of those that served in the ATG. Of those, approximately 1,200 applications have been received, approved and U.S. Department of Army discharges issued.

ATG veterans or their family members are encouraged to complete an application for discharge. All of the application materials can be found at www.atg.alaska.gov, along with instructions for completion and submittal. Also at this web site are listings of those that are known to have served in the ATG.

Questions regarding the ATG application process can be addressed to:

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Arctic Care Spreads Across Norton Sound



Operation Arctic Care 2012 took place in April this year providing residents in western Alaska with topnotch medical care from a few of America's finest military medical professionals. However 285 Guardsmen, Reservists and active-duty service members have braved the elements this week to bring care to Alaskans in need.

"We've already assisted 2,708 people and performed 5,049 procedures in the first week," said Alaska Air National Guard Lt. Col. Sharolyn Lange, task force medical commander for Operation Arctic Care 2012. "It's going very well, and we are now in the process of switching main body teams from one village to another to serve the final five villages."

With operations ongoing in 11 of the 16 scheduled villages, Arctic Care personnel from across the nation are embracing their opportunity to train and serve here in the land of the midnight sun.

"This has been an opportunity of a lifetime," said Capt. Wade Kinshella, medical detachment registered nurse, Colorado Army National Guard. "It's a wonderful experience and the kids are the best. They are happy to see us, and we're happy to see their smiles."

Kinshella is currently in Brevig Mission overseeing medical operations, training medics, ensuring providers have what they need and assisting with procedures. Next, he and his team are headed to Little Diomed Island, a town with a population of only 80 people and one of the most remote locations in America.

"We are happy we've been able to provide medical, dental, optometry and vet care here and look forward to helping more people on Little Diomed," Kinshella said. "We are trying to take it all in and be respectful of their heritage and culture. We've eaten seal and listened to stories about their people, tradition and culture; it's been unbelievable."

Like Kinshella, Arctic Care has been a career highlight for many who are here and a unique opportunity to help provide basic services that many of us take for granted each day.

"We've processed 460 glasses in five days," said Petty Officer 1st Class Quentin Moncrief, NOSTRA technician, U.S. Navy. "Once we receive a request via fax here in Nome, we start to process the order."

From start to finish, Moncrief are able to make new glasses in only about 10 minutes, saving rural residents a significant amount of time and money.

Emergency Response Exercise in Point Hope

More than 30 Alaska Army National Guard members travelled to Point Hope Feb. 11 to conduct a joint exercise supporting the North Slope Borough. The exercise tested the North Slope emergency response system and provided Guard members the opportunity to train with other local, state, and federal agencies while simulating evacuation and search and rescue missions.

“Point Hope was exercising evacuation and emergency sheltering of citizens,” said Capt. Doug Smith, A Troop commander, 1-297th Reconnaissance & Surveillance, Alaska Army National Guard. “We were called in to support the community by providing Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA).”

According to Smith, DSCA is critical to fostering relationships and being prepared for real world emergencies. He sent his executive officer, 1st Lt. Chris Dailey, to Point Hope ahead of time to plan for the arrival of the main body of Soldiers, while he travelled to Barrow to coordinate the response.

“I flew to Barrow and met with the city manager. We talked about the exercise and then we formulated a plan, which I sent to Dailey,” Smith said. “Dailey ensured we supported the community, taking direction from North Slope emergency response coordinator, Frederick Brower, on where they needed our assistance. Dailey’s leadership and planning were critical to our success during this exercise.”

Receiving the call to support DSCA operations, A Troop Soldiers loaded their gear and boarded a Wyoming Air National Guard C-130 in Anchorage with other members from the State of Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs.

Stopping in Fairbanks to pick up additional Soldiers and equipment, they arrived in Point Hope ready to participate in the exercise.



Focused on evacuation response, the Guard members were also tested in search and rescue operations when a lost hunter was reported as an exercise input.

“Each citizen carries an avalanche beacon when they are conducting activities outside of the village. When there’s an incident the beacon sends out a signal, which is reported to the North Slope Borough emergency managers in Barrow,” Smith said. “When the North Slope Borough received that signal, we supported the exercise by initializing rescue operations.”

Reflecting on A Troop’s ability to support DSCA operations, Smith is happy with the results of the exercise and is even more pleased with the diligence of his Soldiers who performed exceptional leading up to and during the exercise.

“There is a lot of planning that goes in to an exercise like this,” Smith said. “Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Alberts and Staff Sgt. Khris White were critical to this mission. We would have never accomplished this much if these two didn’t coordinate all the behind the scenes efforts in aircraft and logistical support. They were phenomenal, and I’m very pleased with the effort everyone put in during this exercise.”

Petroglyph Returns Home to Alaska

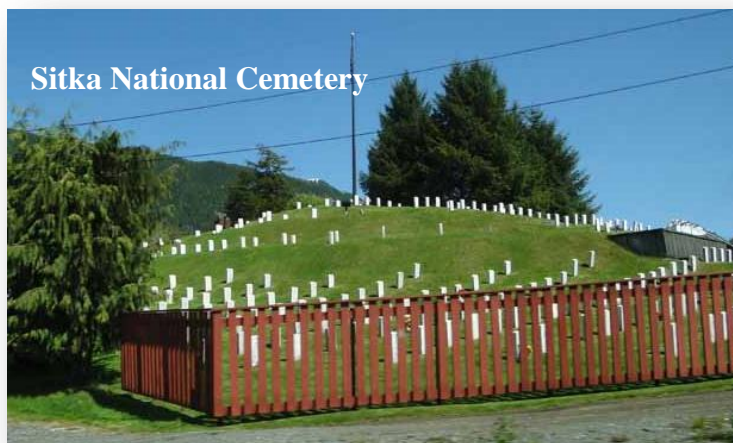
The Alaska Anthropological Association has sent the word out about the recent return of a petroglyph to Alaska. If you have any information on this unusual stone with an unusual story, please contact Debbie Corbett (Regional Archaeologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Region) who has recently provided us with this interesting mystery. Last summer a carved stone was returned to the University of Alaska Museum of the North. We know almost nothing about its origin. The family who returned it reported "It was purchased in California...in the late 1950's or so, when my mother and I found it in an antique store in Berkeley, California. Resting up against a wall, between a ladies' writing desk and a Victorian whatnot, was a large stone, weighing over 250 lbs., and measuring about 2 ½ feet by 3 feet, carved all over with strange symbols."

The only information on where it had come from was the comment that it was from an Air Force Base near Attu Island. That can only be Shemya. We are wondering if anyone out there ever saw this stone, or anything similar? If we can authenticate the stone's origin it will be one of the most significant discoveries in the prehistory of the Aleutians. Ideas to Debbie_Corbett@fws.gov



Bits of History in Alaska

History happens all the time. The Alaska Historical Society reminds us of some of the things that have happened around Alaska at their website: <http://www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org/index.cfm/discover-alaska/This-Month-in-Alaska-History/33>. Here are a few that took place during summers past:



June 12, 1924 - President Calvin Coolidge created the Sitka National Cemetery by executive order.

July 23, 1907 - President Theodore Roosevelt issued a Proclamation establishing the Chugach National Forest.

August 31, 1953 - Ted Stevens was appointed as the U.S. District Attorney in Fairbanks, his first government job in Alaska.

What are your preferred methods of contact?	<input type="radio"/> Letter	<input type="radio"/> Fax	<input type="radio"/> Email	<input type="radio"/> Telephone
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Offices

Mailing address	
Primary email	
Phone number(s)	Fax number

Do you have other staff that you would like us to include in our consultation for environmental and cultural issues?

Office	Name and contact information
Tribal Administrator	
Environmental Coordinator	
Realty	
Elders Office	
Other	

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